

14 JUNE 2018

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel held in Committee Room 1, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Thursday, 14 June 2018

* Cllr W S Rippon-Swaine (Chairman)

* Cllr Ms L C Ford (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

- * P J Armstrong
- * Mrs S M Bennison
- * G R Blunden
- * Mrs F Carpenter

Councillors:

- * A T Glass
- Mrs R Matcham
- * J M Olliff-Cooper
- * D M S Poole

*Present

In attendance:

Councillors:

Mrs A J Hoare (Portfolio Holder for Environmental and Regulatory Affairs)

Officers Attending:

C Read, Ms T Collins, Miss J Debnam, P Ferguson, Mrs R Higgins, Mrs J McClay, Ms S Parry, Ms N Plummer and B Stockley

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Matcham.

4 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meetings held on 8 March and 14 May 2018 be signed by the Chairman as correct records.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by any member in connection with any agenda item.

6 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No issues were raised in the public participation period.

7 PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' REPORTS

Cllr Hoare, the Portfolio Holder for the Environment and Regulatory Affairs, thanked the officers and the task and finish group for their hard work in reviewing the Council's policy on contaminated land and preparing the strategy document that would be considered later in the meeting.

Cllr Hoare was pleased to advise Members that a report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Cabinet to allow this Council, working in conjunction with key partner organisations, to take advantage of new powers to address litter being dropped from vehicles.

The "Leave Only Footsteps on the Beach" campaign would be launched by the Chairman of the Council at Hordle Cliffs on Saturday 16 June. Cllr Hoare was grateful for his support in increasing the profile of this initiative and also thanked Mandy Pickard for her work in producing the posters for the event.

Work on the extension to Calshot Cemetery was progressing well with most of the vegetation having been cleared from the site, in compliance with the requirements to catch and rehome any reptiles. The tender process for the installation of the car park would start shortly.

The officers had successfully prosecuted someone for fly tipping and they were due for sentencing on 20 June. As this was a second offence it was hoped that the penalty would be substantial.

The Government's proposals on recycling bring back schemes, which were yet to be published, would affect the County Council's waste strategy, which had consequently been delayed. As a consequence, over this summer, this Council would be concentrating on reducing contamination rates, which were currently at around 11%, which was better than most, but could be improved.

Cllr Hoare was pleased to report that two of the Street Scene apprentices, Lewis Sergeant and Joe Carruthers, had won awards in the IOSH apprentice awards for designing a database to log and record personal protective equipment. The system would be introduced at this Council and would be a valuable, practical, addition to the Council's management of this equipment.

The Portfolio Holder invited Members to serve on a task and finish group to look at how the Council promoted, distributed and funded the "Seaview" magazine which was distributed to all beach hut owners. Cllrs Bennison and Glass volunteered to serve on the task and finish group, and 2 additional members, not on the Panel, would also be sought.

The Portfolio Holder also supported the proposed appointment of a task and finish group to look at fuel efficient vehicles and the infrastructure for electrical charging points.

8 AIR QUALITY UPDATE

The Panel received a presentation on the latest information available on the proposed Southampton Clean Air Zone. This Council was only marginally affected, with only a 1 km stretch of the A35 leading to the city boundary included in the proposals. This Council's officers had worked closely with Southampton City Council which was taking the lead.

The controls proposed by the City Council would affect commercial, but not domestic vehicles. This was expected to be sufficient to meet the air quality objectives. The scale of charges for commercial vehicles entering the clean air zone formed part of the consultation package. There would be some exemptions, including for newer vehicles that met clean air standards, and there was some funding available to retrofit vehicles so that they would comply and become exempt. It was recognised that many commercial vehicles would already be exempt. It was estimated that 50% of the HGVs visiting the port were already exempt.

It was expected that a 12 week consultation period on the proposals would be launched shortly.

9 FOOD AND SAFETY SERVICE 2017/18

The Panel reviewed the performance of the food safety service over the last year, as set out in their service review report.

The service had maintained its programme of premises inspections, with the frequency of inspection tailored to the risk presented by the premises. In addition, new premises, or premises that had come under new management, needed to be inspected.

The National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme was continuing to encourage food businesses to improve their standards and 97% of food businesses in the District were now rated at 3 (generally satisfactory) or better. Re-inspection in advance of the normal programmed inspection period was a source of income for the service, as a fee of £162 was charged. Many businesses considered this was a sound investment to gain recognition of improved standards.

Where standards were poor the service took enforcement action as necessary. For lesser concerns an advisory letter was sufficient, but 45 hygiene improvement notices had been served on 16 businesses, and 2 had voluntarily closed as they represented a serious risk to health. One business had been prosecuted and another given a sample caution for serious food hygiene offences.

The service had investigated 528 reports related to food or infectious diseases, about half of these relating to food premises where complaints were received from members of the public. Public Health England had referred 280 cases of infection or food poisoning for investigation. This work was considered a high priority in the service's workload.

Food sampling was an important part of the service, with the Food Standards Agency placing considerable emphasis on the importance of sampling as part of a high quality food safety service. Sampling was carried out particularly at high risk businesses, normally food producers carrying out specific processes such as sous vide or fermentation.

Members debated the "Eat out, Eat well" scheme which recognised those businesses offering healthier eating options to their customers. This Council had piloted the scheme through 5 businesses, including 1 theme park and 2 large schools, where there was high footfall and high profile. In addition, it was understood that other schools in the area, supplied through Hampshire County Council's catering service, were taking part in the scheme, in recognition of the importance of diet in tackling childhood obesity. Members considered that it would be interesting to get some feedback from the businesses on the uptake of the

healthy options. It would however be impossible to follow through to measure any effect on obesity, which was a multi-factorial problem. The scheme would be gradually rolled out to other businesses, focussing initially on those with good food hygiene ratings, as they would be more in tune with the ethos of the scheme.

Members also noted that consideration was being given to taking part in the Primary Authority scheme, which allowed businesses to form a statutory partnership with a local authority or group of authorities to secure assured, robust and reliable advice on food safety.

In answer to questions, members were advised that mobile food businesses were subject to inspection, normally by the local authority in which the trailer was stored. There was close co-operation between authorities to ensure effective cover.

10 FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN 2018/19

The Panel considered the service plan for the forthcoming year, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme for the food safety team for 2018-2019 be recognised and supported.

11 CONTAMINATED LAND STRATEGY

The Panel considered a revised Contaminated Land Strategy, to reflect current legislation and practices. The proposed document had been considered by a task and finish group, which had commended it to the Panel for adoption.

The emphasis in the Strategy reflected the current ethos in the legislation, favouring a voluntary approach to remediation, with the most common route being through the development control or building control processes. The Council would be taking a strategic risk based approach to the potentially contaminated sites that had been identified in the District. Should a site represent a risk to health or to ecological interests the owners of the contaminated site would be able to agree a realistic timetable of remediation with the Council; and enforcement powers would only be used as a last resort.

The Panel was advised that a few further minor amendments would need to be made before the document was adopted to take account of changes in legislation.

The Panel thanked the officers and the task and finish group for their work in developing this new Strategy document.

RESOLVED:

That the Contaminated Land Strategy, as attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be supported and commended to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regulatory Affairs for adoption.

12 COASTAL FUNDING - UPDATE

The Panel was updated on the work being done through the Coastal Funding Task and Finish Group to explore additional sources of funding to make up the shortfall in government support for 3 important coast protection schemes at Barton, Milford and Hurst. As the schemes did not offer high value benefits, such a shortfall was inevitable. A variety of options were being explored for each scheme. A Strategy would need to be in place to support the funding application process. In addition, the local councils that were affected would need to be involved in the process.

It was hoped to bring recommendations to the Panel in the autumn to feed into the budget preparation process.

Cllr Carpenter, Chairman of the Task and Finish Group, thanked the officers and the Task and Finish Group for their work to progress the developing proposals.

13 KERBSIDE GLASS COLLECTION

The Panel was updated on the effectiveness of the text reminder service and Recycling Reward Scheme that had been introduced to promote the kerbside collection of glass for recycling. The Council had successfully bid for funding for these initiatives, which had been considered in part because local residents were finding it difficult to remember their glass collection date, which was only monthly, leading to a lower than expected set out rate of glass for collection.

The Government's funding had required the introduction of the Recycling Rewards Scheme, through which residents were entered into a draw and received prizes as a reward. A budget of £10,000 per annum had been set aside for this purpose. Local residents had not however liked the scheme, with many feeling that there should not be rewards for recycling activity that they should be doing anyway. The uptake had therefore been low and the scheme was not felt to be helpful to the overall objectives.

The text reminder scheme had however proved to be popular and successful in helping residents to put their glass out for collection on the correct day. The scheme had been heavily promoted, through a variety of media, to bring it to the attention of local people. There were now 18,951 people registered under the reminder service, representing about 20% of households.

The reminder service had been invaluable in the very inclement weather over the last winter and had allowed local residents to be informed that their normal refuse collection could not take place.

There was scope to expand text reminders into other service areas. A staff alert scheme had already been established and had proved useful. Other potential service areas included reminders for repeat pest control visits, bulky waste collections and clinical waste collections. Other appointment and staff alert schemes were also under consideration and development.

The Panel was pleased to note that the kerbside collection of glass had successfully maintained the Council's collection rates following the closure of a high proportion of the previous bring sites. The percentage of glass being included in the black sack residual waste had also shown a slight decrease, which was welcome. In addition, the glass manufacturers had reduced the weight of glass in each unit, so that overall tonnages could easily have reduced, but had not.

RESOLVED:

That the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regulatory Affairs be advised that this Panel is satisfied with the success of the text messaging alert system and would commend its continuation and expansion, but consider that the Recycling Reward Scheme should cease, because of the lack of public support for it.

14 FUEL/EMISSION EFFICIENT VEHICLES

RESOLVED:

That a task and finish group be established to look at options for the Council's fleet and also the establishment of the necessary support structure (rapid charging points), with the members of the Group to be Cllrs Bennison, Blunden, Glass, Matcham and Poole.

15 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND PROVISIONAL BUDGET OUTTURN

The Panel noted the annual performance of services under the purview of the Panel and also the provisional budget outturn figures.

16 WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED:

That the work programme, as attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes, be approved to guide the Panel's activities over the coming months.

CHAIRMAN

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL – 14 JUNE 2018.

WORK PROGRAMME

ITEM	OBJECTIVE	METHOD	LEAD OFFICER
13 SEPTEMBER 2018			
Local Plan - Update	To be briefed on matters raised in representations received on the Local Plan following Publication and prior to formal Submission	Officer Report	Louise Evans
Southampton Clean Air Zone	To be advised of the responses to the consultation process and to consider this Council's views	Officer Report	Joanne McClay/Rachel Higgins
Strategy for Coastal Funding	To consider the findings and recommendations of the task and finish group	Task and Finish Group Report	Peter Ferguson

ITEM	OBJECTIVE	METHOD	LEAD OFFICER
15 NOVEMBER 2018			
Fuel/Emission Efficient Vehicles	To be updated on options for the Council's Fleet and the establishment of the necessary support infrastructure (Rapid Charging Points)	Officer report	Colin Read
Private Sector Housing	To be briefed on the Council's roles and responsibilities and to be advised of the latest position	Officer Report	Sarah White

ITEM	OBJECTIVE	METHOD	LEAD OFFICER
10 JANUARY 2019			
Environmental Strategy	To consider the draft environmental strategy that will develop an overarching framework for the Council's environmental activities	Officer report	Colin Read